AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

1. **(currently amended)** A starter set of refractory components for starting a spiral brick lining in a ladle used for handling molten metal, said starter set comprised of:

a plurality of refractory components, each component having a planar bottom surface, an upper surface and end surfaces, said components dimensioned to be arranged end-to-end wherein the end surface of a component facing an adjacent component is dimensioned to mate with the end surface of said adjacent component, and wherein the upper surfaces of said refractory components are alignable to form a continuous, inclined upper surface profile having a leading end and a trailing end, said upper surface profile sloping upwardly from said leading end to said trailing end and being upwardly bowed wherein refractory bricks set onto said upper surface profile are nearly horizontal at the trailing end of said upper surface profile.

2. **(previously presented)** A starter set as defined in claim 1, wherein said upper surface profile is arched.

3. **(canceled)**

4. **(previously presented)** A starter set as defined in claim 1, wherein each of said component has a flat, upper surface.

5. **(previously presented)** A starter set as defined in claim 1, wherein each of said component has a contoured, upper surface.

6. **(original)** A starter set as defined in claims 4 or 5, wherein said starter set has four (4) components.

7. **(original)** A starter set as defined in claim 6, wherein said refractory components are cast refractory pieces.

8. **(original)** A starter set as defined in claim 6, wherein said refractory components are isopressed refractory pieces.

9. **(previously presented)** A starter set as defined in claim 6, wherein said refractory components are mechanically or hydraulically pressed.

10. **(original)** A starter set as defined in claim 6, wherein one of said components is dimensioned to be disposed in a course of bricks in said ladle and three of said components are dimensioned to be disposed on said course of bricks.

11. **(previously presented)** A starter set of refractory components for starting a spiral course of lining bricks in a ladle used for handling molten metal, said starter set comprised of a plurality of refractory components dimensioned to be assembled together to form a non-linear, contoured ramp surface having a leading end and a trailing end, said refractory components dimensioned such that said contoured ramp surface is slightly arched between said leading end and trailing end and said leading end of said ramp surface is alignable with an upper surface of a first course of lining bricks in said ladle and said trailing end of said ramp surface is alignable and substantially coplanar with an upper surface of a second course of lining bricks in said ladle, said second course of lining bricks being disposed on said first course of lining bricks.

12. **(original)** A starter set as defined in claim 11, wherein said starter set is comprised of four (4) components.

13. **(original)** A starter set as defined in claim 11, wherein said ramp surface is contoured such that said ramp surface at said trailing end is nearly horizontal.

14. **(canceled)**

15. **(previously presented)** A starter set as defined in claim 11, wherein each of said refractory components has a planar upper surface.

16. **(previously presented)** A starter set as defined in claim 11, wherein each of said refractory components has a contoured, upper surface.

17. **(previously presented)** A lining for a ladle used to handle molten metal, said lining comprised of:

a first course of like, refractory bricks arranged horizontally in said ladle, said first course having an upper surface;

a second course of said like refractory bricks arranged to spiral within said ladle, said second course disposed on said first course, and said second course having an upper surface; and

a starter comprised of at least one refractory component, dimensioned to form a contoured ramp surface, said starter being disposed between said first course and said second course of like refractory bricks, said ramp surface at one end of said starter set aligned with said upper surface of said first course and said ramp surface at another end aligned with said upper surface of said second course, said ramp surface being arched between said one end and said other end such that refractory bricks set on said other end of said ramp surface are substantially horizontal.

18. **(original)** A lining as defined in claim 17, wherein said starter is comprised of a plurality of refractory components that are dimensioned to be assembled together.

19. **(original)** A lining as defined in claim 18, wherein each of said refractory components has a leading end and trailing end, said ends dimensioned such that adjacent ends of said refractory components mate with each other.

20. **(original)** A lining as defined in claim 17, wherein said starter is comprised of four (4) components.

21. **(original)** A lining as defined in claim 20, wherein each of said four (4) components has a flat, upper surface.

22. **(original)** A lining as defined in claim 20, wherein each of said four (4) components has a contoured, upper surface.